THE LEARNING CIRCLE

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES ON FIRST NATIONS IN CANADA

AGES 8 TO 11

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
Affaires indiennes et du Nord Canada

Canada

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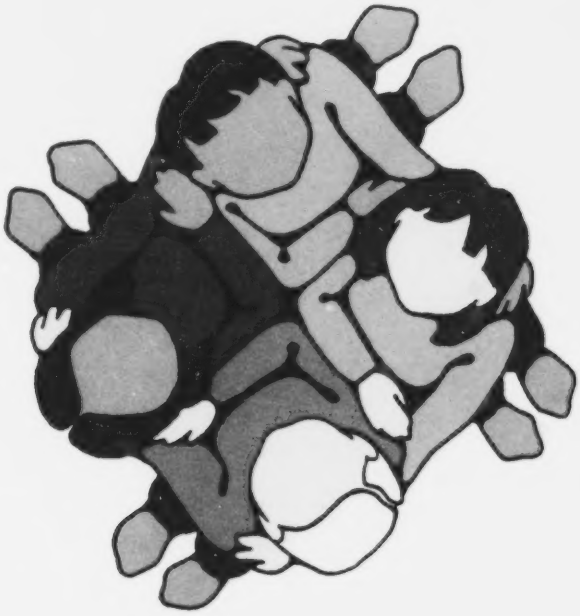

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INTRODUCTION

The Learning Circle has been produced to help meet Canadian educators' growing need for elementary-level learning exercises on First Nations. It is the second in a series of three classroom guides on First Nations in Canada.

Because First Nations are culturally diverse, the information in this activity book does not necessarily apply to all groups. To learn more about particular First Nations, and to get help with learning activities, teachers are encouraged to consult local Aboriginal Elders, cultural education centres or friendship centres. Some key addresses and contact numbers are listed at the end of this guide.

The Learning Circle is organized in thematic units, each with its own teaching activities. Units are designed to give teachers and students simple but effective exercises, projects and activities that will encourage students to learn more about First Nations. Educators can follow some of the exercises as stand-alone units on First Nations topics, or integrate them with existing curricula on Aboriginal peoples.

Most exercises in **The Learning Circle** can be completed in one period. Certain others will take several periods, days or weeks.

GENERAL INFORMATION ON FIRST NATIONS

Many academics maintain that people inhabited North America some 30,000 years ago, and possibly earlier. This is confirmed by archaeological research. As more and more archaeological data have become available, some academics are of the opinion that this date should be revised.

However, many First Nations dispute the claims about their arrival in North America. Most First Nations origin and creation stories reinforce the belief that the First People lived in North America since time immemorial.

The term First Nation came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word "Indian," which many people found offensive. Although the term First Nation is widely used, no legal definition of it exists, unlike "Indian." The word "Indian" is still used to describe one of three groups of people recognized as Aboriginal in the **Constitution Act, 1982**. The other two groups are the Métis and Inuit.

There are six major cultural regions of First Nations in Canada. From east to west, these are the Woodland First Nations, the Iroquois First Nations of southeastern Ontario, the Plains First Nations, the Plateau First Nations, the First Nations of the Pacific Coast and the First Nations of the Mackenzie and Yukon River basins.

Each Nation possesses its own unique culture, language and history. Their collective presence in North America does not diminish their distinctiveness any more than the collective presence of nations in Europe lessens the distinctions between the cultures of Poland and Italy, for example. The practice of identifying all First Nations as a homogeneous group obscures the unique and rich traditions that each First Nation developed and nurtured.

First Nations today retain their cultural and linguistic distinctiveness. As with other cultures throughout the world, many contemporary First Nations result from a long history of influences, some peaceful and some arising out of conflict. Some First Nations merged with others. Some were simply absorbed over time by larger Nations, and some disappeared altogether. The cultures and languages evident today are the products of complicated, centuries-old processes that shaped the evolution of most, if not all, cultures everywhere.

Although there are many differences between First Nations, there are commonalities as well. For example, all First Nations were dependent on the land for survival and prosperity. All First Nations were hunters and gatherers. Some were also farmers. Without the skills and knowledge to hunt and fish and to gather food and medicines, First Nations would not exist today.

Another commonality is that all First Nations lived in organized societies with their own governments, religions and social and economic institutions. Individuals, families and larger groups of people, such as clans, tribes and Nations, behaved according to a broad range of agreed-upon social, political and economic values.

A third commonality was trade. All First Nations in Canada and North America as a whole traded extensively throughout the continent. Expansive trading practices contributed to the growth and development of First Nations cultures. These practices also enabled many First Nations to respond to the fur trade as competitive, efficient trading partners with Europeans.

UNIT 1

TRANSPORTATION AND TRAVEL

MAIN IDEA

First Nations developed several means to travel efficiently in an environment with innumerable streams, rivers and lakes. The snowshoe, toboggan and canoe, particularly the light and maneuverable birchbark canoe, allowed First Nations living in colder, wintry climates to travel across the land at different times of year.

OBJECTIVES

1. to teach students about traditional forms of First Nations technology
2. to teach students the principles behind certain transportation technologies, such as weight distribution and water resistance

TEACHER INFORMATION

All First Nations used a variety of technologies to transport themselves and their possessions from one place to another. For example, First Nations faced with long, cold winters designed and constructed snowshoes. Snowshoes were a light and efficient means to travel swiftly over deep snow. Without them, hunters could not pursue large animals such as caribou, deer, elk and moose which provided humans with essential food for communities' survival during the long, cold winter months.

Snowshoes also enabled families to maintain traplines throughout the winter. Traplines were a source of smaller game, like beaver, muskrat and rabbit. They supplemented the meat from the larger animals, which were more difficult to kill. Without snowshoes, access to snow-covered lakes would also have been difficult. Lakes were important sources of food fish such as pike, walleye, trout and whitefish.

First Nations designed several different shapes of snowshoes. However, all designs consisted of a curved wooden frame, a harness and rawhide lashings in a crisscross pattern to support the wearer. The invention of snowshoes demonstrated First Nations' knowledge and understanding of the science of weight distribution. The light but sturdy wooden frames and the open weave of the rawhide lashings enabled First Nations to travel in deep snow with a minimum of physical effort and considerable efficiency.

Another invention that influenced First Nations' winter travel was the toboggan. The word toboggan is borrowed from the Mi'kmaq word taba'gan. The original toboggan design was created by the Mi'kmaq people of eastern Canada. Originally, these toboggans were made of bark and animal skins. Toboggans were constructed of long, thin strips of wood, usually cedar over two metres long. They were used principally by hunters and trappers to transport food and furs. Toboggans were ideal for hauling heavy loads in deep snow. The curved front allowed the toboggan to ride easily over mounds and bumps. Although it was not as widely distributed among First Nations as the snowshoe, it made it possible for First Nations in the subarctic — including the Swampy Cree, Ojibway, Algonquin, Montagnais, Saulteaux and Innu — to transport heavy loads across deep snow.

Apart from walking, the principal mode of travel and transportation for all First Nations was the canoe. It was ideally suited for travel on either the East or West Coast or on the land's countless rivers, streams and lakes. First Nations throughout Canada constructed canoes uniquely suited and adapted to these natural conditions.

From the East coast to the Rocky Mountains, bark-covered canoes enabled hunters and fishers to pursue their prey, and families to relocate to more productive sites. Traders also used canoes to participate in the continent-wide trade network in which all North American First Nations engaged. Birchbark was the bark of choice. But elm and occasionally spruce bark were also options, albeit less satisfactory ones. When suitable bark was unavailable, animal hides such as moose were sometimes substituted.

On the north Pacific Coast, First Nations cultures such as the Nootka, Coast Salish, Kwakiutl and Haida, used the canoe to fish and to hunt whales and other sea mammals. Unlike the light and comparatively fragile bark-covered canoes used by the traditional cultures east of the Rocky Mountains, the Pacific coast canoes were essentially dug-outs. Skilled canoe makers created them from the huge, abundant red and yellow cedar, and redwood. Occasionally, they used wood from the Sitka spruce trees that thrived on the fertile Pacific Coast. The vessels ranged in size from small, narrow craft four metres long to immense sea-going canoes of 14 metres or more, with room for 60 to 70 passengers.

Although First Nations in the east, such as the Ojibway and Malecite, did construct dug-out canoes, the Pacific Coast First Nations canoes were giants by comparison.

Some First Nations used two other vessels for water transportation. These were log rafts and round, bowl-shaped craft (known as bull boats) that were covered with animal skins. These occasionally substituted for canoes when people were crossing rivers or travelling short distances on open water.

To propel their canoes, First Nations used paddles carved from wood. Each First Nation produced its own distinctive paddle. All of them had a considerably narrower blade than the modern canoe paddle. When they had to travel upstream, especially in shallow or slow water, First Nations used long poles instead of paddles.

Another form of First Nations transportation was the travois, which was pulled by dogs or horses. It consisted of two long poles harnessed over the animal's back. A seat or bench was fixed to the two poles so that the travois could carry a load, including human passengers.

The light and maneuverable birchbark canoe, the toboggan and snowshoe became lasting features of Canadian history. Each one contributed to Europeans' exploration of the country, and all three were essential elements in the fur trade. Contemporary models of these forms of transportation are used throughout Canada, primarily for recreation. However, First Nations in the north and in remote communities continue to use them widely. Despite new materials used in their construction, the fundamental designs of the three devices remain unchanged.

Like other Canadians, First Nations today rely on cars, trucks, vans and airplanes for their daily and business travel. Most First Nations communities also depend on gas-powered vehicles such as snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, and motorboats for travel and transportation.

ACTIVITIES

1. CANOE DESIGNS

Canoe designs varied considerably among First Nations. Ask students to design posters using assorted materials to illustrate canoe designs. Students can:

- identify the types of bark that were used in the construction of bark canoes
- explain what materials First Nations used to seal bark canoes water-tight
- compare the designs of bark canoes of three different First Nations
- describe the sea-going canoes of the First Nations on the Pacific Coast
- discuss the merits and drawbacks of skin-covered vessels
- compare the different designs of the Pacific Coast canoes.

Hang the posters in the hall for passers-by to admire and study.

2. CANOE CONSTRUCTION

- There were two principal methods of canoe construction among First Nations: the dug-out and the bark-covered frame. Students can compare the two techniques. Why was the dug-out method favoured on the Pacific Coast and not so popular east of the Rocky Mountains?
- In their study of canoes, ask students to examine the techniques used by First Nations to minimize the possibility of passengers puncturing the thin birchbark. To enhance their understanding of the techniques, direct students to the Aboriginal Science Projects on SchoolNet (see Resources section). Ask students to research and discuss other aspects of Aboriginal science illustrated in the design of bark canoes.

- What parts of a tree in addition to the bark went into the construction of a bark canoe?
- Students can investigate which First Nations east of the Rocky Mountains used dug-out canoes. A class discussion can focus on the differences between the dug-out canoes west and east of the Rocky Mountains, including design, size and the types of wood used.

3. PADDLES

- Students can examine the different designs of First Nations traditional paddles.
- Conduct a class discussion on the differences between modern recreational paddles and traditional First Nations paddles.
- Many First Nations of the Pacific Coast decorated their paddles with intricate and colourful designs. Ask students to create their own designs. Start a discussion on the meaning and importance of paddle decorations.

4. SNOWSHOES

- Compare the different designs of snowshoes used by First Nations.
- Discuss the reasons for the different designs.
- How did snowshoes benefit hunters?
- What was babiche, or rawhide thongs? Why was it essential to the function of snowshoes?

5. TOBOGGANS

- Compare traditional First Nations toboggans with contemporary ones. What are the major differences?
- Why were toboggans important to hunters and trappers? To assist in the discussion, ask students to research the average annual snowfall around any of the following areas: James Bay, Ontario and Quebec; Norway House, Manitoba; La Ronge, Saskatchewan.
- Discuss the importance of weight distribution with students and ask them to examine how this principle applies to a toboggan and to a sled with runners. Students can consult the Aboriginal Science Projects on SchoolNet (see Resources section) for information.

- Demonstrate the principle of weight distribution with a toboggan. If you do not have a toboggan, use a flat, thin piece of wood or a piece of stiff plastic. You will also need snow and an object that weighs between 2 and 4 kilograms. Whichever type of toboggan you choose, it should be large enough to support the weight.

  If snow has accumulated around the school to a depth of 30 centimetres or more, place the toboggan on the snow. If there is not enough snow on the ground, a pile of fresh snow or one that is not iced will do.

  Place the weight on the toboggan, which you have laid on the snow. Take care to ensure that the weight remains on the toboggan, and ask students to observe the effect of the weight on the toboggan. Next, place the weight directly on the snow. Ask students to compare the results. Ask students to identify other examples of the principle of weight distribution.

UNIT 2

TRADITIONAL DWELLINGS

MAIN IDEA

First Nations dwellings came in many shapes and sizes. Construction materials also varied from culture to culture. The size and design of traditional dwellings often reflected the economy and environment of the inhabitants.

OBJECTIVES

1. to increase knowledge of First Nations traditional dwellings
2. to learn the impact of the economy and environment on First Nations traditional dwellings
3. to increase knowledge of the distinctions between traditional First Nations cultures

TEACHER INFORMATION

First Nations developed a broad range of traditional dwellings. Each type reflected the availability and the varieties of wood and other materials in their territories and their principal traditional economies.

On the north Pacific Coast, First Nations such as the Haida, Nootka, Kwakiutl and Salish constructed several types of dwellings that were variations of the rectangular planked house. This structure was widely used throughout the coastal communities as the principal winter dwelling and meeting house. These dwellings were usually constructed from cedar and redwood and were large enough to accommodate several families. Some of these great houses measured 15 by 33 metres. Rectangular in shape, they had a variety of roof designs, including the low pitch, the shed roof and the three pitch. The Canadian Encyclopedia provides examples of the different designs. As many as 20 of these structures made up coastal villages. Many First Nations on the north Pacific Coast built equally large meeting houses that were adorned with elaborate family and clan crests, carvings and totems. These meeting houses served as principal gathering places for political, ceremonial and recreational purposes.

Their traditional economy included trade up and down the coast, and inland with other First Nations. In addition to trade, they harvested fish from the sea and the rivers that drained into the Pacific Ocean and the fertile coastal forests. With an abundance of food and provisions, people were able to maintain semi-permanent village sites that endured for generations.

The First Nations who resided on the Plains, such as the Blackfoot, Sarcee, Assiniboine and Cree, did not have the abundant, large trees that flourished in the coastal rain forests. Their principal dwellings, skin-covered tipis, were easy to assemble and relatively light to transport. These structures complemented their traditional economy, which emphasized trade with other First Nations and the hunt for large game animals such as elk, deer and, most importantly, bison or buffalo. Although agriculture was not a mainstay of their economy, they gathered many edible plants and berries for food and medicine. Mobility was vital to their lifestyle, and the tipi with its skin cover over a delicate circular frame of slender but sturdy lodge poles, was an excellent choice.

Trees for lodge poles were abundant and easy to find. Buffalo hides, sewn together, served as a lightweight, weather-resistant covering. The conical structure took less than one hour to assemble, and could be easily disassembled for travel or stored for future use. The floor diameter inside most tipis provided about four to seven metres of living space. The interior was bright and airy. External light illuminated the interior and the base of the tipi could be rolled up to different heights to permit air to pass freely inside. Ventilation, a conical shape and an opening at the top that could be widened or narrowed from within, ensured that fires for cooking and heating burned efficiently regardless of the weather.

East of the Plains, in the subarctic and the eastern Woodlands, two principal traditional dwellings evolved. The First Nations such as the Swampy Cree, Montagnais, Ojibway, Algonquin, Attikamek and Mi'kmaq who resided in this territory lived primarily in conical or dome-shaped lodges covered with bark. Sometimes they used animal hides to cover dwellings somewhat similar in design to Plains tipis. A third type of dwelling — rectangular-shaped and bark-covered — was also used. All of the structures included a vent or hole to ventilate smoke from fires used for cooking and warmth to escape.

As with First Nations on the Plains, mobility was key to the survival of most of the First Nations in the subarctic and eastern Woodlands. But these regions did not have the numerous buffalo on which the Plains First Nations so greatly depended. Moreover, travel was comparatively more difficult because of the numerous waterways, lakes and dense forests in the subarctic and the eastern Woodlands. The search for trade goods that were scarce in their territory, and for large game, migratory water fowl and edible plants and berries, meant these First Nations had to travel constantly.

Dwellings had to be highly efficient to meet families' needs, as well as readily and easily assembled. The frames of these structures were made of wood such as alder, willow, tamarack, hickory and ash, and birch or elm bark covered them. Birchbark was preferred because it was light, water-resistant and easy to harvest. Moreover, when it was rolled up, it was easy to carry. The interiors of these dwellings were darker than those of the Plains tipis because of the bark coverings. Floors in the lodges usually consisted of numerous layers of carefully arranged coniferous branches which created a fragrant, soft foundation. Animal skins and hides were then placed on top. First Nations also sometimes used mats woven from rushes, cedar bark or animal hides.

The other principal dwelling, the longhouse, protected and housed the Iroquois and Huron First Nations. These Nations' traditional economy was focussed on trade with other First Nations, and on hunting, fishing and agriculture. They grew beans, squash and corn (often referred to as the three sisters) and tobacco. Their longhouses were semi-permanent dwellings that accommodated

as many as 10 to 20 families. These dwellings were rectangular, with arc-shaped roofs, and covered with elm, ash or cedar bark. Some were as long as 50 metres and four metres wide. Villages consisted of as many as 10 to 15 longhouses.

Although these First Nations did hunt and trade, their focus on agriculture meant that they did not have to move to many different sites. In this way, they differed from many other First Nations with more migratory lifestyles. Because the longhouses were semi-permanent, families could reside in them until the surrounding land became infertile. When this happened, the Iroquois and Huron First Nations relocated their families to a different site and built new villages.

Another example of a traditional First Nations dwelling was the semi-subterranean structure. These were built partially, or almost completely underground, with strong wooden frames lined with bark or furs. The Carrier, Interior Salish and Dene First Nations constructed this type of durable, warm dwelling as protection from harsh winter conditions.

During the warm, sunlit summer and autumn, most First Nations lived in temporary summer dwellings that were easy to build and maintain. These were basic structures, usually lean-tos, sturdy and large enough to provide protection from seasonal storms.

In most traditional First Nations dwellings, furnishings included fur and hide robes and blankets, and mats woven from bark, reeds or animal hides. Cedar, fir or spruce branches were placed in several layers on the bare ground in the dwelling's interior to create a soft, fragrant foundation. Robes, blankets and mats were then placed on top.

ACTIVITIES

1. TYPES OF DWELLINGS

- Students can search the Internet or the Canadian Encyclopedia to study and draw four different traditional dwellings.
- Identify the kinds of trees used for two different traditional structures.
- What parts of the trees were used in their construction?
- Conduct a class discussion on the pros and cons of two different First Nations traditional structures.

2. ECONOMY

- Students can examine the traditional economies of the Pacific Coast First Nations and the Plains First Nations. Ask them to focus on hunting and fishing. What kind of creatures did the traditional First Nations depend on for their survival, and how did this affect First Nations lifestyles and dwellings?
- Conduct a class discussion on the importance of the tipi to the Plains First Nations and the great houses to the north Pacific Coast First Nations.
- Examine and discuss the agriculture practised by the Iroquois and Huron First Nations.
- Students can role-play a trading exchange between an Ojibway hunter and a Seneca agriculturist. What goods might be exchanged between the two? Why would the goods exchanged be important to each person? A similar exchange could be held between a Plains Cree and a Dene. What goods might be exchanged between Pacific Coast First Nations?

3. COVERINGS

First Nations used a variety of materials for the exteriors of their dwellings. Students can create an inventory of the different materials used to construct traditional houses. Another inventory can be developed that includes the different species of tree bark and trees that First Nations used to cover their dwellings. Glue specimens onto rigid cardboard. Ask students to make short presentations.

4. LANGUAGE

Each First Nation has a word or phrase for its traditional dwelling. The Canadian Encyclopedia is a useful resource to help students identify the different words in the First Nations language for dwelling or home. Students can compile a list of words for house or dwelling in several First Nations languages.

5. STRUCTURE

A local First Nations community or cultural education centre may be able to help you find a speaker who could give a presentation on First Nations dwellings at your school. Students can make a small gift for a visiting guest speaker. In many First Nations cultures, gifts are offered as a symbol of respect, or in exchange for a person's knowledge and time.

UNIT 3

WATER: ITS MANY USES

MAIN IDEA

Water was a priceless commodity in First Nations cultures. It served many functions, including a means for craftspeople to make wood pliable. They manipulated wood, tree bark and tree roots to construct many valuable objects. These included the ribs, gunwales and coverings of bark canoes, snowshoes, toboggans, baskets and many other objects. Water was also essential for transforming animal hides into soft, supple leather for clothing and footwear.

OBJECTIVES

1. to learn the importance of water to First Nations traditional cultures
2. to understand First Nations' different uses of water
3. to explore some unique qualities of water

TEACHER INFORMATION

First Nations used water for cooking and washing, and as an essential ingredient in remedies and cures. They also used water to manipulate leather for clothing and wood products for canoes and snowshoes. Water softened porcupine quills so that women could use them to decorate clothing, footwear and articles such as baskets, pouches, and quivers to hold arrows or knives.

Many First Nations built sweat lodges of various sizes. They were often constructed with wood, usually alder or willow saplings. Wood was shaped by hand to create a dome two to three metres high. The dome was then covered with bark or animal skins. There was a small opening for bathers to go in and out. This opening was also used to bring in small rocks that had been heated in a nearby fire. These rocks were usually placed in a small pile inside the lodge in a shallow depression in the ground. The bathers splashed water on the rocks periodically to produce a cleansing, relaxing heat and steam. The effect was similar to a modern-day sauna or steam bath. In many First Nations communities, the sweat lodge was an integral part of numerous vital, sacred ceremonies.

Water was also required to make leather from animal skins such as moose, caribou and deer. Water softened the hide after the hair and excess flesh had been scraped away. Without water, hides could not have been stretched during the tanning process to produce a thinner, softer, more pliable material.

First Nations recognized water's ability to soften wood such as cedar and ash so that strips of these woods could be bent to produce curved pieces without breaking. These curved and shaped woods were needed to build canoes, snowshoes, lacrosse sticks and baskets. Wood soaked in water was shaped to produce gunwales and ribs for canoes. Builders also soaked the stiff bark for the canoe in water so that they could then shape it onto the wooden frame.

After immersion in water for several hours or days, cedar, ash, hickory and other woods become pliable. They can be bent without fracturing or cracking. A skilled builder can gauge how long wood needs to soak in order to achieve the series of bends to create the desired shape. This process might require several days and several bends. When many bends are needed to produce the final product, the wood is often tied to retain the initial and successive bends. Once the wood for a snowshoe frame was bent to the proper shape and curve, for example, it was bound with spruce roots or rawhide to help it retain its new shape permanently.

Roots from trees — especially spruce roots — produced strong and sturdy bindings. After these roots had been stripped into long, thin pieces, they were immersed in water for several days. They were used to bind materials together and when they dried, the binding or lashing was durable and extremely tough. Long, thin strips of rawhide, treated in the same way, served a similar purpose. Thinner and lighter than coniferous roots, wet rawhide served to bind stone and flint heads to arrows and spears, and bone and hardened wooden hooks to fish hooks. When the rawhide dried, the thin strips shrank and hardened to produce a very strong, but lightweight, binding.

The Swampy Cree, Ojibway, Saulteaux, Mi'kmaq and Odawa First Nations learned how to use the forces created by fast-moving water in turbulent rivers so as to travel safely in their light bark-covered canoes. Secure in their knowledge of eddies and currents, and the unique forces created when water crashes over boulders and ledges in rivers, skilled paddlers safely piloted canoes down tumultuous rapids and whitewater. Had they not known the effects of fast-moving water in rivers, the fragile bark canoes would have been in danger of shredding or splitting apart on the river rocks and boulders. The lives of the canoeists and their families, together with their belongings, would then all have been at risk.

All First Nations produced remedies by combining in water plant roots, and the leaves and bark of various trees and plants, such as sassafras, beech, cedar, burdock and wintergreen. Each root, leaf, plant or bark was treated differently, either in combination with other materials or substances, or alone. In each case, water was an essential ingredient that helped to produce the liquid remedy.

The Iroquois created a game, snow snake, for winter and spring recreation. By dragging a smooth log specially prepared for the task, they made long, shallow troughs that extended for several hundred metres in the snow. The troughs were wetted with water and allowed to freeze. When there was an icy surface covering the entire trough or track, men hurled slender, polished pieces of hardwood, called "snakes," down the icy track. The snakes ranged from one to two metres in length, and successful players often threw them a distance of over 100 metres.

Water, in its snow form, also provided temporary shelter for First Nations. Quinzees were built by many First Nations, including the Dene and Chipewyan, when severe winter conditions stranded hunters far from their winter lodges. Quinzees were hollowed out of snow drifts or from other large accumulations of snow. Because of snow's insulating property, these shelters were reasonably warm. One or two hunters could be comfortably accommodated for several days until the weather changed.

All First Nations looked upon water as a vital, living element in their environment. Water, as a living entity, occupied an important place in the oral histories and sacred stories of each First Nation.

ACTIVITIES

1. CANOES AND SNOWSHOES

The National Film Board of Canada has produced films on canoe construction, and the manufacture of snowshoes that demonstrate the skill of bending wood with water: "**César's Bark Canoe/César et son Canot d'écorce**" and "**Snowshoe/La Raquette**." The films show how water was integral to the manufacture of the different parts of a canoe and snowshoe. Show one or both films to students and ask them to focus on the use of water. Ask them to identify the different parts of the canoe that are created with the help of water. Students can draw the pattern created by the wet rawhide — babiche — in snowshoes. To demonstrate how tough and durable dried rawhide is, bring a snowshoe to class and examine it closely.

2. BENDING WOOD

A class can undertake a project to bend wood that has been soaked in water. To do this, you will require one or several pieces of thin, untreated wood, approximately 30 centimetres long, a six-litre pail or container and some heavy twine or light rope. If you have access to natural wood, use cedar, ash or maple tree branches that are no more than two to three centimetres thick. Immerse the wood in water for two to three days. Then remove the wood and have students start to bend the pieces of wood carefully. When the wood begins to bend, some care will be necessary to ensure that the bend does not crack or break the wood. When the maximum bend is achieved at the first attempt, tie the wood so that it does not spring back to its original shape — notch the wood at each end and secure it with twine. Immerse the wood again for some time; then continue to bend it and tie it until the desired shape or bend is achieved. Under the right conditions, the wood can be bent to a permanent U or circle shape, without being damaged.

3. IMPORTANCE OF WATER TO LIVING THINGS

To understand the importance of water to living things, students can:

- research and compare the length of time humans can live without food and how long they can live without water
- conduct a simple plant experiment to show the effect of water on living things. Obtain two small, healthy plants. Start the experiment by having students water both plants. Label one plant "A" and the other "B." Establish a regular watering system for plant "A" (twice a week). Tell students that plant "B" will be watered only once every 10 days. Maintain this regimen for two months. Students can keep a journal and describe each plant and its evolving condition.

UNIT 4

FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES: RESERVES

MAIN IDEA

Reserves are unique communities in Canada. Many do not have the social and economic conditions that other communities in Canada enjoy. Despite this, reserves continue to be important to many First Nations.

OBJECTIVES

1. to gain a basic historical understanding of why reserves were created
2. to explore various features of reserve life
3. to become more familiar with contemporary First Nations communities

TEACHER INFORMATION

Like all Canadians, First Nations people live in many different types of communities, both urban and rural. Unlike other Canadians, many First Nations people also live in communities known as Indian reserves or reserves.

Indian reserves are lands set aside specifically for the use of Status Indians.[1] Here are some basic facts about reserves:

- there are 610 Indian bands,[2] comprising 52 Nations or cultural groups (Haida, Cree, Mohawk, etc.) and more than 52 languages
- there are nearly 2,500 reserves[3]
- with some exceptions, only Status Indians reside on reserves
- 58 percent of the Status Indian population (over 650,000) live on reserves
- Indian reserves make up less than 1 percent of the land base in Canada.

Reserves were created in a number of different ways and for various reasons. Before Confederation, missionaries and colonial administrators established reserves to eliminate the nomadic lifestyles many First Nations pursued. Reserves were also established through treaties[1], by "grants" from the Crown, or through special arrangements with individual First Nations groups.

Unfortunately, most Canadians have limited exposure to life on Indian reserves. Many base their opinions solely on what they see and hear through the media. Many reserves are isolated, and since Confederation, provincial and federal governments have faced challenges to address the unique legal, historical and cultural issues affecting First Nations. Both the isolation of reserves, and these continuing outstanding issues, have contributed to high levels of unemployment, chronic housing shortages, a variety of health and social problems and low rates of education. While these conditions contribute to many of the problems facing First Nations people who live on reserves, reserves continue to be important to First Nations people.

Many First Nations members who choose to live in the city still regard their reserves as their physical and spiritual home. Reserves are often rural, and therefore provide First Nations people with a welcome contrast to the anonymity and hurried pace of urban life. In general, the customs and the traditions of First Nations are more evident on reserves than elsewhere. Reserves are usually home to a long line of extended family and relatives. Ultimately, the reserves are important to First Nations people for the same reasons that home matters to everyone.

Just as First Nations cultures themselves are diverse, so there are many different types of communities in Canada representing a broad spectrum of First Nations lifestyles. There are hundreds of small and remote communities scattered throughout the North, for example. Then there are First Nations communities located in cities, such as Capilano in North Vancouver or Kahnawake, near Montréal. Communities such as the Six Nations Reserve in Ontario and the Peter Ballantyne Reserve in Saskatchewan are home to over 8,000 residents. There are reserves that support only a dozen people. Some First Nations communities are very poor; others are quite wealthy.

For many Canadians, an Indian reserve is only an image on a television screen or a signpost on a provincial highway. This unit will encourage students to explore life in First Nations communities in Canada, while gaining a basic understanding of how Indian reserves were created.

GLOSSARY

1 Status Indian — An Indian person who is registered under the **Indian Act**. The act sets out the requirements for determining who is a Status Indian.

2 Band — A group of First Nation people for whom lands have been set apart and money is held by the Crown. Each band has its own governing band council, usually consisting of one or more chiefs and several councillors. Community members choose the chief and councillors by election, or sometimes through traditional custom. The members of a band generally share common values, traditions and practices rooted in their ancestral heritage. Today, many bands prefer to be known as First Nations.

3 While some Indian bands have been allotted only one reserve, other bands have several small reserves which comprise the band's land base. For a statistical overview of the social conditions of Indian reserves in Canada, consult the **Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Volume 3**, or visit **www.inac.gc.ca**

4 Treaties — Formal agreements between First Nations and the Crown involving promises of peace and friendship, lands cessions and/or other issues and benefits.

ACTIVITIES

1. ARE ALL FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES THE SAME?

Not all reserves are alike: ask students to write a short report (1-2 pages) comparing two Indian reserves. The Internet is a useful resource for this activity. Several First Nations profile their communities on the Internet.

Students may wish to compare the populations living on each reserve, the types of services offered in each community, the location of the reserve, and the larger Nation to which the reserve belongs. For example, in Nova Scotia, Eskasoni is part of the Mi'kmaq Nation.

Students can include information about employment, education, housing and health. They may also write briefly about the unique historical, geographic or cultural features of each reserve.

2. RESERVE REPORTERS

Tell the students that they are reporters for a fictional newspaper. The newspaper is doing a special pull-out section on "Reserves in Canada." The newspaper was impressed with the reserve profiles from the previous activity, and it has come to the students because of their expertise in this area. Their assignment in this activity is to produce a short editorial piece based on what they have already learned.

The editorial is a thought-provoking piece on the benefits and drawbacks to life on a reserve. Students should attempt to present both sides of the argument. If they have any personal experience with reserves, either from previous activities in this unit or on their own, they should include this in their editorial.

3. COMMUNITY EXCHANGE

Very few Canadians have visited a First Nations community. In this activity, teachers and students are encouraged to enter into an exchange relationship with students from a reserve, and experience life in a First Nations community.

There are many people on a reserve who can help arrange an exchange trip. You may start by making contact with either the administration of a school on the reserve, members of the First Nation's education authority, or the band council. An Education Counselor may be able to provide local contacts or help you to meet teachers at the school on the reserve. Representatives from a friendship centre or a cultural education centre may also be able to help you make contact with the appropriate individuals at a nearby First Nations community.

Each reserve is unique, but there are particular features of the community that teachers may wish to point out to students. For example, students should visit the Band Office and the school. Many reserves have a museum or cultural centre, a health clinic, or a recreational centre. Students may want to ask to see examples of economic development on the reserve.

Once a connection has been made with teachers and a class at a reserve school, your class should extend an invitation to First Nations students to visit your school and community. Just as many Canadians misunderstand life on reserves, First Nations also have misconceptions about life in mainstream Canadian communities.

If your class includes students who live on a reserve, this activity can still be relevant. All reserves are different and students may benefit by comparing and contrasting another reserve to their own. Students can visit a different reserve or they can set up a "virtual" exchange on the Internet.

4. RESERVE E-PALS

One of the best ways to learn about life on reserve is to enter into correspondence with students on an Indian reserve, via the Internet.

The Aboriginal Youth Network (**www.ayn.ca**) provides several ways for students to meet and share information with First Nations youth.

When beginning this activity, it is important that teachers (or parents) supervise the initial correspondence between students. Ideally, First Nations and non-First Nations classes can communicate as groups, through their teachers, before undertaking exchanges between individuals.

Once students have made a friend on the Net, they should take the opportunity to learn as much as they can about the community where their friend lives. Does their friend like living on the reserve? Why? Will they always live on the reserve or would they like to move away? Are there aspects of reserve life that they don't like? What are their favourite things about their home?

5. WELCOME TO OUR RESERVE

In recent years, many First Nations communities have begun taking advantage of the economic development opportunities offered by tourism.

Ask students to create a poster for the tourism campaign for a First Nations community. They may choose a reserve they are familiar with, or a reserve that they have profiled in previous activities. What unique features of the community would appeal to tourists or to people who had never visited a reserve? Do the local people offer enticing cuisine, like moose or salmon? Are there historical sites which display First Nations culture, like a museum? Are there any special events during the year, like a powwow? Are there First Nations people who will provide environmental "eco-tours" of the wilderness in the area?

If students need some ideas, they may want to visit some of the First Nations tourism sites on the Internet, including (**www.nativetrail.com** or **www.autochtones.com**) and (**www.ammsa.com**).

As an extension activity, tell students that there are First Nations people who do not want to open up their communities to tourism because they do not want their culture to become a commodity. A "commodity" is anything that can be bought and sold for convenience or profit. Ask students what they think of these concerns.

UNIT 5

THE FAMILY

MAIN IDEA

Family is a vital institution in First Nations societies.

OBJECTIVES

1. to learn how the family is important to First Nations societies
2. to explore the role the family plays in shaping First Nations members' identity as individuals
3. to examine students' own roles as family members

TEACHER INFORMATION

In most First Nations societies, "family" signifies not only parents and their children, but a broad network of grandparents, uncles and aunts, and cousins. In some First Nations societies, members of the same clan are considered family.

Historically, the extended family was the basic unit of survival in First Nations societies. It would have been impossible to subsist on the land without everybody working together. Every member of the family had an important role to fulfill and everyone was expected to contribute to the general welfare of the family. Often, family needs were put ahead of individual desires.

Young mothers and fathers were often busy securing and preparing food. Parenting was traditionally undertaken by members of the extended family. Children also learned from other members of the community with special skills, such as traditional plant knowledge or artistic abilities. The education of children was both a family and a community responsibility.

A variety of historical policies contributed to the disruption First Nations families face today.[1] The residential[2] school system is one example. Almost one-third of First Nation children went through the residential school system. The contemporary education of some First Nations children has played an important role in changing traditional family relationships.

This unit emphasizes the critical role that family plays in the education of the child.

Involving parents in their children's education strengthens their interest in their children's educational success. It is important that teachers use this unit as an opportunity to encourage parental involvement in the classroom and the curriculum.

Some ways that families can be involved are by:

- bringing their special skills to the classroom. Parents and family members can share these skills through a natural teaching style. Examples of some shared skills include baking, cooking, gardening, sewing, simple woodworking, drama, dance, music and sports
- making learning materials
- accompanying the children on field trips
- telling stories to the children, particularly stories of their own family background
- holding workshops where family members and staff together design and create a cultural place for the children to reinforce and rekindle First Nations traditions.

As a final note, this unit emphasizes the importance of extended family to First Nations societies, and encourages students to explore their own extended families. However, some contemporary families may be very different from traditional First Nations families. Single parents, divorces, separations, teenage parents, same-sex parents and interracial marriages are part of contemporary First Nations family landscape, just as they are in non-Aboriginal families, and the very meaning of "family" is shifting dramatically. Students may not have a "traditional" nuclear or extended family, and they should not be made to feel that their own family structure is more or less valid than others.

GLOSSARY

1 In the 1960s, many First Nations children were removed from their homes by the child welfare system. The removal of children from First Nations families and cultures had damaging and traumatic effects upon many First Nations children.

2 Residential schools operated in Canada prior to Confederation with the first schools established by the churches as part of their missionary experience. The Government of Canada played a role in the administration of this system as early as 1874, mainly to meet its obligations, under the **Indian Act**, to provide an education to Aboriginal people and to assist with their integration into the broader Canadian society. The last of the federally-run schools closed in 1996. It is now widely understood that this system has contributed to weakening the identity of First Nations, by separating children from their families and communities and preventing them from speaking their own languages and from learning about their heritage and cultures.

ACTIVITIES

1. OUR FAMILY WALL

Start the unit on families by creating a photo wall of the students' families.

Ask students to bring photographs of their parents, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, grandparents or other people whom they consider part of their family. Each student should have a small space on a bulletin board where they can post their pictures.

The wall need not be limited to pictures; students should be welcome to post anything else which symbolizes their families. For example, if the family likes going to movies on Sunday, perhaps the students could put up a ticket stub. Or, if the family is First Nations and the child is a member of a clan, he or she could post a picture of the clan animal.

Finally, ask students to write a short piece describing their family and post it with the pictures.

2. MY FAMILY STORY

Family histories of First Nations are extremely important. Children were regularly told stories about members of their family, living and deceased. Family histories were kept intact by passing on the teachings and experiences of the Elders. If children knew their family history, then they would know who they were, and what responsibilities they had.

A teacher's own family history may be the starting point for a lesson on the history of families. By telling the history of your family, you can model to the students what you would like to hear from them. This could include the number of people in your family, your cultural background, where you lived when you were growing up, what your parents and grandparents did, and any other stories important to your family history.

Ask students to find out more about their own family history. They can begin by interviewing parents, grandparents or aunts and uncles. When their research is completed, students will tell the history of their own family in a classroom Family History Circle, the way you told the history of your family.

An alternative to this is to instruct students to tell each other their family histories in pairs. Then, in a circle, each student tells the history of his/her partner's family.

The students can also illustrate a portion of their family history with a painting or drawing, which can be added to the Family Wall.

3. THE STORY OF MY NAME

Among many First Nations, names are considered a powerful and important connection to family, and are sometimes passed down through families in special naming ceremonies. Some names have survived for many generations, and there are often fascinating stories behind the names. In some First Nations, newborn children are named after a recently deceased relative or member of the community because it is believed that infants inherit the qualities of the deceased person.

Ask students to collect information from home about their names. In this way, parents will become involved and students will expand their knowledge of their family history.

Once this research is complete, invite students to share the stories of their name with the class. Again, a teacher's name may be the starting point for a lesson on the stories of names. The story behind your name (if there is one) could include: who named you, why, or who else had the name; and whether the name has significance in your family.

4. CHORES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

First Nations traditional cultures placed considerable responsibility on children. They were expected to help with jobs such as tending the nets, feeding the dogs, cutting and hauling wood, and cutting up meat and fish for drying. Even the smallest children were taught that their chores were important to the family's well-being.

Ask students to make a list of chores that they perform at home, such as:

- feeding the family pet
- taking out the garbage
- washing dishes
- folding laundry.

Once the list of chores has been compiled, ask students how they feel about doing chores. Ask them what they think happens when chores do not get done.

5. RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

When European missionaries began to live among the First Nations, they concluded that the sooner they could separate children from their parents, the sooner they could prepare First Nations to live a European lifestyle.

Mission-run residential schools were administered jointly by Canadian churches and the federal government. For a number of years, residential schools delivered formal education to Aboriginal children across Canada.

Residential schools had a tragic effect upon many First Nations families. They disrupted the smooth transmission of beliefs, skills and knowledge from one generation to the next by separating the children of First Nations from their culture and preventing them from speaking their language and learning about their cultures and traditions. This system reflected attitudes of racial and cultural superiority and the experience has left a legacy of personal pain with these former residents that continues to reverberate in communities today.

Ask students to make a list of their feelings if they have ever experienced being away from home for an extended period. Conduct a class discussion on the differences between being away from home and being in a residential school where the teachers' language, culture and beliefs are different from their own. Ask them to imagine what their experiences would be if their teachers for the next three or four years were from an different culture who expected them to conduct their lives according to that culture.

6. FAMILY NUTRIENTS

Many of those First Nations children who attended residential schools underwent a devastating process of enforced assimilation. The normal and healthy process of change and growth slowed for some of the First Nations children in certain schools where conditions were physically, psychologically and spiritually unhealthy. This activity will illustrate how growth and development in living things are affected by deprivation.

Find a section of grass (or plants or flowers) that the students can monitor over the course of a month or so. Place a small box over the grass. Check the progress of the grass every week and have the students keep track of their observations in a journal. For example, describe in detail what the grass looked like before the box was placed there — its colour, the shape of the stalks, the feeling it evoked in the students. Compare this to the grass once it has been covered, i.e., any growth, new flowers, etc.

After a month or so, organize a talking circle with the students. Remind students of their lesson on the residential schools and ask if they can compare their observations of the grass to the residential school experience of some First Nations children. Wrap up the discussion by pointing out that any society or civilization whose normal development is obstructed will have a difficult time maintaining a balanced and healthy way of life.

For a follow-up to this experiment, remove the box from the grass and monitor how it fares once it is back in its natural environment.

7. I'M IMPORTANT!

One of the traditional teachings of First Nations cultures is that each member of the family comes into the world with special talents and gifts.

Ask students to take some time to think about their own special skills and talents. Ask them to compile a list of these skills and talents and how they are shared with their family. When they have completed their list, tell them to keep it in a special place, so that they can always remember the importance of their contributions to their family.

Extend the activity by asking students to think about the special talents and contributions of other family members. Once they have made a list, have them turn the list into a "Thank You" card which they can give to the family member(s) they have chosen.

8. DISCIPLINE AND RESPECT

Discipline was very important within families in First Nations cultures. Life on the land was not easy or without danger. Parental discipline was necessary and natural in order to teach young children to survive.

Ask students to identify how society achieves discipline of its members? Do they think that discipline is fair or necessary? What would happen if there were no rules in society? In a class discussion, encourage students to compare society to a family. Ask students to compare the techniques used by society to achieve discipline with the various techniques that parents or other family members use. Which techniques succeed and which ones fail?

At the core of this discussion is a very important First Nations ethic — respect. Ask students to design a poster which promotes respect in the family and at home. The poster may illustrate some of the discipline that has already been discussed. Or it can show that parents need to respect their children just as much as children need to respect their parents.

9. THE FAMILY PICNIC

In First Nations cultures, such as the Swampy Cree, Odawa and Abenaki, families spent the autumn, winter and spring at traditional family hunting and fishing territories. Then they would make their way back to a common village site for the summer. When people reconvened for the summer, feasting, leisure activities and social visits were common pastimes in addition to the vital hunting, fishing and gathering everyone engaged in during the plentiful summer months.

To illustrate a traditional gathering, ask students if they would like to host a picnic for their families. The class can discuss the following:

- what event are we going to celebrate with the picnic?
- where will we hold the picnic?
- when will we hold the picnic? How much time will it take?
- what resources do we need to get? Will we need money?
- whom will we be inviting to the picnic? Would we like to have any special guests?
- what benefits will we get from holding a picnic?

10. PICNIC PART II — JOBS THAT NEED TO BE DONE

It's important that students understand that hosting the picnic will include responsibilities. It would be very difficult for just one or two people to do all the work, so delegating different responsibilities to people is very important. Here is a list of potential responsibilities:

- making invitations
- writing and giving speeches (opening prayer, welcome, acknowledging special guests, talking about families)
- preparing or getting the refreshments to serve guests (How many are coming? Assuming it is a potluck, who will bring what food? What drinks? Funds? Servers? Clean-up crews? Cups, plates, napkins?)
- distributing the gifts (who? how? when?)
- making gifts for a give-away to honour the guests (beaded necklaces, bracelets, decorative boxes, pictures, paintings, drawings, book markers, performing a play).

11. PICNIC PART III — THE DAY OF THE PICNIC

The format of this day may vary, but a schedule might include the following:

- arrange all the food
- if possible, a First Nations Elder or a member of the clergy says an opening prayer and blesses the food
- a student welcomes the guests
- a student explains why the picnic is being held, and the importance of families to the class

- a student identifies who has worked on the picnic
- everybody eats, making sure that Elders and seniors are served first
- plays, songs, and/or dances take place
- guests receive gifts that have been made
- a student makes a closing speech and thanks everyone for sharing the day.

12. PICNIC PART IV — BUILDING A BRIDGE

It is important that students are able to transfer the experience of the picnic to their everyday lives. Ask some or all of the following questions to assist the transfer:

Did we learn anything about our families that can help us in school? Why is it important that we put on this picnic? What parts of the preparation will be valuable to us in the future? Why did First Nations families gather together in the past? Why was the picnic important today? Why was your contribution to the picnic important? What happens when everyone is working together? How do you feel, now that the picnic is over? What would you change for the next time?

UNIT 6

FIRST NATIONS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

MAIN IDEA

Traditionally, First Nations cultures believe that human beings were a part of nature, not separate from it. Everyone had a responsibility and a role as the Earth's stewards.

OBJECTIVES

1. to learn how First Nations viewed their responsibilities to the land
2. to explore how students' behaviour and actions affect the environment

TEACHER INFORMATION

"If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? Every part of this earth is sacred to my people."

— Chief Seattle, 1854

When First Nations leaders were asked to surrender their traditional lands by marking their names to treaties, many of them asked treaty commissioners and others, "How can we sell what we do not own?"

However, the view that First Nations had no notion of land ownership is inaccurate. Most, if not all, First Nations had systems of land tenure. The rules affecting traditional land varied widely in format and complexity, from culture to culture. Some First Nations such as the Swampy Cree, Innu and Ojibway acknowledged the rights of individuals or families to specific territories, while others such as the Carrier, Gitxsan and Nisga'a vested land rights in clans or "houses." Students should understand that First Nations cultures understood and practised forms of land ownership.

To understand what traditional leaders meant when they asked, "How can we sell what we do not own?" it is useful to attempt to see the land through the eyes of a First Nations hunter. To ensure that the land continues to support the human population, hunters must carefully balance their own needs with the rules of respect that they believe originate from a spiritual higher power. By observing

these rules and other teachings from Elders, hunters enter into a unique relationship with nature and the environment. They achieve or strive to achieve a balance between the needs of humans and other forms of life, be they animal, plant or spirit. The hunter performs the role of a steward or custodian of the land.

The activities in this unit are designed to introduce students to the relationship between First Nations and the environment. They will help students understand the respect for the natural world that is inherent in the First Nations traditional view of the land.

ACTIVITIES

1. CIRCLE OF LIFE

The First Nations recognized one of the simplest — but frequently ignored — fact of life: that everything in nature is connected. This concept is often described as the "circle of life." In this modern technological age, it can be difficult for many of us to grasp the complexity and interrelatedness of all living things. This activity is designed to illustrate nature's connections to the students and how the circle of life can be broken by the actions of humans.

Plants, animals, and the environment within which they survive, create an ecosystem. Each element and being maintains the ecosystem by transferring energy through a food-chain. Examples of a food-chain include:

- herring to salmon to sea lion to orca whale
- beetle to shrew to snake to fox
- algae to tadpole to bass to otter
- bacteria to fungus to tree to squirrel.

This activity is designed to illustrate how the absence of any component of a food-chain can affect the ecosystem as a whole.

Give students the opportunity to identify a familiar food-chain. If they are unable to do this, use the following example: trees are an important energy source in a food-chain. Aphids feed on the nutrients in the leaves of the trees; the aphids are eaten by sparrows and other birds, which are then eaten by hawks and eagles. Ultimately, the circle is completed when carnivores die, decompose and become part of the earth.

Clear a large space in the classroom or, better, go outside to a grassy area. Give each student a number from one to four and put all the "ones" together in one group, etc. Assign each group a component of the food-chain. In the example here, "ones" are trees and "fours" are hawks, etc.

Now form the circle of life. One student from each of the four groups should stand in the cleared area, shoulder-to-shoulder next to each other, facing the centre of the circle. Keep adding to the circle in sets of four until all the students are in it.

Instruct students to turn to their right and take one step toward the centre. Everyone should place their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them. Tell them that at the count of three, they must slowly sit down, on the knees of the person behind them, keeping their own knees together to support the person in front of them .

When they are all supporting each other, tell them that this represents the circle of life. Tell them that once they have mastered the routine, they will understand how the transfer of energy affects an ecosystem. It may take several attempts before the entire group is able to maintain its composure and posture. Repeat the routine until they have succeeded in keeping everyone supported.

When the group has mastered the routine and a strong lap-sit circle is formed, identify a student who represents an aphid. Tell students that pesticide sprayed on the fields has spread to the surrounding trees. Then remove the "aphid" from the circle. If the circle does not collapse completely, the students will be struggling to maintain it. Students can be removed from the circle based on a variety of conditions: logging, toxic waste, urban expansion, soil erosion, acid rain, poachers, oil spills and over-fishing. At a certain point in this activity, the removal of too many students will destroy the effect. Teachers will need to plan this activity with some care and forethought to exploit the learning to its maximum.

When the activity is complete, it should be clear to students that a human action that affects any of these crucial components of habitat will have an impact upon the rest of the circle. Ask students what this activity means to them and what they have learned.

2. PERCH OF PERCEPTION

In order to survive life on the land, First Nations needed to be aware of everything around them, from weather changes to animal activity. Share with students how this activity emphasizes the First Nations' values of seeing the world as fully as we can — as a way of appreciating, respecting and learning more about our world.

We may see our classrooms every day. But if we were questioned about the simple details, we would probably be entirely unaware of certain objects, colours, sounds and textures surrounding us. Each of us can train ourselves to see like an eagle. Most of us are familiar with the image of the eagle sitting perched in an old tree, watching the world unfold below. The eagle may be watching for prey, such as mice, rabbits or fish, or it may be preening its feathers. It may just be resting.

The "Perch of Perception" activity will help students learn to be careful observers, help them be aware of their surroundings, and recognize their environment as part of the larger whole. Ideally, the "Perch of Perception" activity will be outside, either in the schoolyard or near the school. However, it is possible to stay within the school, or even the classroom.

Start this activity with some practice. Place 20 or so different objects on a desk. Cover all of the objects and tell students that they are to observe and note the objects under the cover when it is removed. Remove the cover for approximately 30 seconds, then replace it. Ask them to list on paper the objects they saw. When their lists are complete, remove the cover again. Now, on the back of their first list, ask them to make a new list of what they see. What did they miss? What did they remember?

Take students to a place outdoors where they can choose their own "perch." This may be under a tree, beside a rock, or on the corner of the playground. Their "perches" may be anywhere the students please, as long as they are by themselves. Once they have selected their perches, ask them to stay there and take note of what is happening around them. This means seeing, listening and smelling. Perhaps a group of children walks by. Maybe ants are building a hill. They may hear a siren in the distance. Perhaps a cloud passes over the sun. Impress upon the students that they are to note anything and everything that happens while they are at their perches.

When they return from their perches, ask them to describe what they saw, heard or smelled in as much detail as possible. After three visits to their perches, have students take paper and colouring pencils to their spot to record the things they see, smell and hear. The teacher may also want each student to begin a "Perch of Perception" journal.

The first time students are at their perches, they may be unaccustomed to being alone, or to not having any set tasks to perform. The teacher may want students to be at their perch for only three to five minutes. As they grow more familiar with the "Perch of Perception" activity, the length of time students stay at their perches can be extended. The "Perch of Perception" activity could be as short as the time spent on the Environment theme, or it could be continued throughout the year.

3. SOUND AND RHYTHM

First Nations hunters watched animals carefully and were keenly aware of the rhythmic patterns and musicality of nature. It is often said that the beat of the drum which is central to many First Nations cultures is the heartbeat of Mother Earth. Indeed, many of the traditional dances of First Nations were learned from animals — the Eagle Dance, the Rabbit Dance, the Deer Dance and the Prairie Chicken dance, for example.

In this activity, students will combine this First Nations' awareness of nature's music with Western musical tradition by "recording" on a musical score a symphony composed by nature.

Hand out copies of a blank musical staff, divided by several bar lines. Ask students to go outside (perhaps to their spot at the "Perch of Perception") and listen very carefully to the bird calls, insects, and the voices of any other animals you may hear. They may hear the wind blowing through the leaves of the tree, or water bubbling down a stream. Each time they hear a sound, they are to record it on the staff.

Remember, nature is the composer, not the student. The students' tasks are to record the music that they hear in the most creative and simple way possible. They may wish to draw small pictures to represent the sounds they hear, or write out the sounds phonetically.

This can be a very personal activity, and the student's completed score would be perfect as an entry in his or her "Perch of Perception" journal.

4. GIVING THANKS

One of the fundamental teachings of First Nations cultures is that the circle of life involves both giving and receiving.

When many First Nations hunters prepared for a hunt, they offered prayers and gifts to the Creator and to the spirit of the animal they were hunting. If these offerings were made in a respectful way, the hunters believed that the animals would accept the gifts and present themselves to the people. The hunters would offer additional gifts when the animal was slain and when it was being prepared for food.

In some First Nations cultures, small bits of food, tobacco and sweetgrass are often presented as gifts in exchange for what the land or the environment has provided.

Share these teachings and traditions with the class. Ask them if there are ways that they show appreciation for what they receive.

5. ANIMAL POETRY

Crucial to the traditional world-view of many First Nations is their appreciation that human beings are connected in the circle of life with all other species, and that each species has its own set of special knowledge and skills enabling it to live in the world. In some First Nations legends, the skills and knowledge of human beings did not compare to those of the animals — humans could never possess the strength of a bear, the speed of deer, the intelligence of a wolf or the sight of an eagle.

Many First Nations peoples observed animals closely and sometimes modeled their own behaviour after them. This activity allows students to experience wildlife as the inspiration for a poem. It is an ideal activity to combine with the "Perch of Perception" — students should be outside when they are composing their poem. Ask everyone to think about an animal, preferably a wild animal. Students may wish to close their eyes for a few minutes, so that they can imagine the animal living in its natural environment.

When they are finished, they should write their poem, either about the animal, or from the animal's perspective.

6. REBUILDING THE CIRCLE

Launch a class project for improving wildlife habitat in the community. Discuss with the class how the wildlife in their community can be better taken care of. Students should be able to make a list of the wildlife that they encounter daily. Divide the class into groups that are assigned to examine birds, squirrels, small creatures on the ground such as ants, beetles and crickets and creatures in the ground such as worms. Ask each group to identify the different ways it can contribute to the health of its particular wildlife.

7. NATURE AS A RECYCLER

Long before blue boxes, nature was an avid recycler. Eagles are an example of how nature recycles. Although eagles are often portrayed snatching a fish out of the water or a rabbit running through the field, the substantial portion of an eagle's diet is carrion. Eagles eat fish that have washed up on shore or animals that are already dead. Other examples of nature's recycling include worms, bears, turkey vultures and snapping turtles.

Once students are aware of nature's recycling processes, ask them what types of materials they recycle at home (newspaper, tin cans, plastic, vegetables and fruit in the compost).

Does the classroom/school recycle? If not, an extension activity could involve establishing the "Eagle Claws Recycling Squad." Students could design boxes for each of the recyclable materials in their classroom. Or they could talk with the principal about setting up a school-wide recycling program.

8. MIGRATION MANAGEMENT

Bison were the most important resource of the First Nations of the Plains, including the Blood, Sarcee and Blackfoot. Bison were used for food, shelter and clothing. They were also important spiritual symbols for the Plains people.

First Nations recognized that their own livelihood depended on the well-being of the bison and they took care to protect the bison habitat. In many areas, First Nations burned the open brushy clearings and fields to enhance the bison's food and habitat.

The original population of Plains bison numbered between 50 and 60 million. They moved across the Prairies in herds during their annual migration. Of course, the bison which migrated north-south did not recognize any borderline between Canada and the United States.

The destruction of the bison was, in part, a deliberate action by governments to control the First Nations who depended so heavily upon the roaming herds. Also, the migratory routes of the bison stood in the way of settlement and agriculture. By 1900, the bison herds, in Canada and the U.S., were close to extinction.

The purpose of this activity is to help students recognize how human decisions can have a major impact upon wildlife. This activity also aims to encourage a practical understanding of the concepts of wildlife management and sustainable development.

Divide students into small working groups and provide them with drawing materials and a very large piece of graph paper. Ask each group to draw a mural of a habitat for waterfowl. (This activity is easily adapted to a habitat for other migrating species important to First Nations, such as deer affected by construction of a highway, caribou affected by a pipeline or salmon affected by the construction of a new dam.) In the mural, students should include: appropriate food, water sources such as rivers and lakes, marshlands, farms and forests.

Once the mural is done, ask students to trace with coloured pencils the migratory route of a flock of Canada geese as they move from one feeding area to another. Finally, they should draw a small village on the shore of a large lake. If the graph paper they are using contains 200 squares, the village should represent five squares.

Next, tell students that the village is going to expand considerably in the next five years. The development will affect the migration route of the geese. The student groups are now designated as Land Use Planning Committees. Their goal is to design an urban plan that will cause the least harm to the geese. Students will have to seek consensus on their decisions because each member of the group (Planning Committee) holds a veto on any proposed changes.

The development will cover 75 percent or so of the mural after the new additions are included. The additions include the following (the changes to the graph paper with 200 squares are included in brackets):

- the village becomes a city with tall buildings and other structures (50 squares)
- near the city, an airport (10 squares and 10 more for the flight paths of the planes)
- rivers and pollution from sewage and/or pulp mills (10 squares)
- power lines (15 squares)
- a major highway that runs east-west through the city (20 squares)
- clear-cut forestry (10 squares)
- at each feeding station, an increase in hunters (2 squares at each station)
- egg collectors at each station who poach goose eggs (1 square at each station).

The Committees' main task is to plan the development in such a way that the migratory route of the geese is maintained. They will need to discuss how the development might be reduced so that there is no major impact on peoples' needs, and only a minimal impact on the geese. Can proper city services be provided with no impact on the geese? Can new laws be introduced that will reduce or eliminate hunting and egg collection and restrict the use of pesticides? Can large marshlands be protected as goose habitats?

If the Committees achieve consensus, they can "construct" the development on the mural. When everybody is done, ask each Committee to report about the decisions it has made and why. Once the reports are complete, ask them to reflect on how First Nations life on the Prairies would have been different if the bison had remained.

UNIT 7

ELDERS

MAIN IDEA

Elders and seniors in First Nations communities are greatly respected for their wisdom and life experience. Elders can help others deal with their problems in life.

OBJECTIVES

1. to appreciate the older, more senior people in their lives, as well as Elders
2. to become aware that students also have a responsibility in passing on knowledge

TEACHER INFORMATION

Elders in First Nations communities have always been greatly respected by community members. Elders bridge the ancient traditions and beliefs of First Nations, and the influences of today.

Elders fulfill many roles. They are teachers, philosophers, historians, healers, judges and counselors. Elders are the primary source of all the knowledge that has been accumulated by their communities, generation after generation; they are the keepers of spiritual ceremonies and traditional laws that have sustained First Nations through thousands of years. Elders are respected for their wisdom and life experience and they play a critical role in First Nations communities as advisors for new generations.

Students should be made aware that one must earn the right to become an Elder in a First Nations community. Not all Elders are seniors, nor are all old people Elders. Some Elders may, in fact, be quite young. Elders are honoured because they have gifts of insight and understanding, and they are willing to share the knowledge that they possess.

The residential school policy severed the bond between many First Nations children and Elders in First Nations communities. This began with the schools' introduction in the 1830s and continued to the 1950s, when a majority of them were closed. These schools eliminated or reduced severely the role of the Elders in the education of First Nations children. This unit seeks to rebuild and strengthen the learning circle by emphasizing the importance of Elders' contributions in that circle. Elders ensure that the traditions of First Nations continue in a revitalized and renewed form.

In non-First Nations communities, prominent and learned individuals may not be identified by the term "Elder." In situations where Elders are not readily accessible, the activities are designed to promote student interaction with seniors. However, teachers should ensure that students are aware of the difference between Elders and seniors.

ACTIVITIES

1. OUR ELDERS AND GRANDPARENTS

A good way to begin the unit on Elders is to create a photo wall of the students' Elders and grandparents.

Ask students to bring photographs of their grandparents or others they consider to be their Elders. Students can gather pictures of grandparents and Elders as children, young adults or as older people. Each student should have a small space on a bulletin board where they can post their pictures.

Students may also post anything else which symbolizes this person to them. For example, if the Elder plays card games with the student, he or she could put a playing card on the wall. If the person has grandchildren or great-grandchildren, the student can list all of them underneath the picture. Or, if the person does traditional crafts, the student could put a picture of a moccasin or a beaded bag.

Finally, ask students to write a short piece about the Elder they have chosen. This too, can be posted beneath the pictures.

2. DEAR GRANDMA AND GRANDPA

In many First Nations families, young children were often raised by their grandparents. While the parents were busy with the daily chores of survival, grandparents taught the children camp skills, such as gathering wood and getting water.

It is important that students value their grandparents and their knowledge. Whether their grandparents live across the street or across the country, they have an important role in the family.

Ask students to write a letter to their grandparents (or an Elder, if the student does not have grandparents). They should tell their grandparents about what they are studying in school and what they have learned about their own family. They should also mention particular activities that they enjoy with their grandparents. As with other activities, it may be helpful if a teacher can tell a story about his or her own grandparents so that the students have an idea of what to write in their letter.

3. ELDERS' STORIES

Elders transmit their knowledge through their actions and through oral tradition — stories, humour, ceremonies, teachings and other activities.

Elders' stories often include teachings. The values embedded in the stories, and not necessarily the stories themselves, help to educate First Nations children and youths.

Throughout this unit (and others), invite Elders to share their knowledge and experience with young people. Just as parents bring their own set of skills to the classroom, so too will Elders. While some Elders may be happy to share traditional legends or to lead nature walks, others will bring their own diverse experience to the classroom.

4. INTERVIEW A GRANDPARENT OR ELDER

Tell students that the editor of the local newspaper has given each of them the following assignment: interview your grandparents or an Elder.

Examples of the type of information that students can relate in their article include: when the Elder was born, where the Elder has lived, what type of jobs or lifestyle the Elder has had, the biggest changes that the Elder has witnessed, whether the Elder has any family, and what advice the Elder would give to a young person growing up today?

5. ELDERS' TEACHINGS

By now, students will be aware that in many First Nations cultures, Elders and grandparents were often responsible for teaching children. The wisdom of Elders and grandparents is very valuable because it is often based on a broad range of perspectives and experiences. Elders often repeat their advice and stories so that children will have ample time to learn from them.

Ask students to surround the classroom with the teachings they have learned from the Elders and grandparents. When students are finished their interview assignment, ask them to choose something that the Elder or grandparent said which they believed was good advice. Ask the students to write out this saying or teaching on paper and include an illustration of the Teaching. Pin the collected Elders' Teachings in prominent spots around the classroom.

6. SENIOR CITIZENS' CENTRE

In First Nations families, care for the elderly is an important value. Traditionally, in many communities, the youngest child was expected to care for aging parents. The bond between the elderly and the family remained vital and constant.

In contemporary society, many elderly people live in senior citizens' centres. By establishing a relationship between the class and a senior citizens' centre, students will have a regular opportunity to interact with seniors and learn to value a connection with the elderly. Students may also gain insight into aging and how society responds to the elderly.

Students can contribute many things to the lives of seniors. They may entertain them with theatrical or musical performances. Students and seniors may share stories of their own lives. However, it may be best first to ask the co-ordinator or director of the centre what the students can do. Seniors may need assistance with a task, like writing a shopping list, or they may simply be looking for quiet companionship.

Ideally, the relationship with the seniors' centre will continue beyond one visit.

7. OUR LAND

Many Elders possess considerable knowledge about traditional territories in their area. Invite an Elder or grandparent to visit the class to describe, for example, the traditional water routes that were used by surrounding tribes, traditional place names and stories about the land.

If contact with a First Nations Elder is not possible, substitute a senior or a student's grandparent who can describe the changes that have occurred in the community in his or her lifetime.

8. FOOD AND ELDERS

Among some First Nations, a youth's first successful hunt was celebrated with an Elder. Some have traditions that call for Elders and grandparents to receive the choicest pieces of meat and special foods. This was a sign of their families' and communities' respect and appreciation for their knowledge and wisdom.

Invite students to prepare a special meal for an Elder or a grandparent with whom they have developed a relationship during this unit. During this feast, students could share one of their special achievements with the Elder, such as an accomplishment at a sporting event, a piece of artwork or a good grade on a project.

Ask them to write a short narrative describing the meal they shared with an Elder.

9. ONE DAY...

As a final activity on Elders, remind students that they, too, will become older one day. Ask them to write about how they would like to be grandparents and Elders in the future, what their role would be, and their behaviour and feelings.

UNIT 8

THE IMAGINARY INDIAN

MAIN IDEA

Many popular images of "Indians" are stereotypes. These stereotypes continue to influence how society regards First Nations and, occasionally, how some First Nations regard themselves.

OBJECTIVES

1. to explore students' perceptions of "Indians"
2. to explore the roots of prejudice, misunderstanding and stereotypes

TEACHER INFORMATION

When Columbus arrived in what he considered the "New World" in 1492, he believed he had discovered a new route to India and its riches. He named the people he met "Indians." In fact, these people were Arawaks — one group of a large number of distinct indigenous peoples inhabiting the Americas.

Stereotyped images of "Indians" have been nurtured in novels, articles and the press for several centuries. Children learn about Indians in their games and pastimes, from their story books and textbooks and from television and movies.

From Pocahontas to Tonto to sport teams like the Redskins and Blackhawks, images of "Indians" pervade popular North American culture — but don't accurately reflect First Nations' reality. The "imaginary Indian" stereotypically speaks with animals, roams freely in the woods, performs mysterious ceremonies and dresses in fanciful costumes. Children love to do these things as well, and it is normal that children become fascinated by these images.

Not all of these images are negative. For example, the "imaginary Indian" may have some important lessons to teach children about living in harmony with nature. But these images are not authentic. The qualities associated with the "imaginary Indian" — nature-lover, shaman, warrior and princess — more often represent the biases of Western society than actual First Nations cultures. These images have reduced the multiplicity of First Nations histories and traditions to limited and pervasive stereotypes.

Textbooks also perpetuate a particular image of Indians. First Nations still often appear in history textbooks only as traders and military allies. "Indians" tend to disappear from textbooks after the War of 1812, with perhaps a fleeting glance at Indian treaties. Most textbooks give the impression that Canadian society developed without much, if any, contribution from the First Nations.

This unit asks students to identify images of the "imaginary Indian," and shows that these images are far removed from the complex realities of contemporary First Nations societies. By realizing that Canadian attitudes towards First Nations are often based on fantasy, students will be better able to approach and comprehend contemporary First Nations studies and issues.

ACTIVITIES

1. TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALL GAME?

Most students are likely unaware of the stereotypes perpetuated by different amateur and profession sports teams. These include names such as the **Indians, Braves, Redskins, Chiefs, Blackhawks and Redmen**. Fans have adopted mascots adorned with feathers and "warpaint" and use sounds and gestures such as the "Indian chant" and the "tomahawk chop" during games.

In a class discussion, ask students to discuss the pros and cons of these names and images in sports. Ask them to examine if other cultures are used in the same way by sports teams. Ask them to consider why other cultures are not used in this way.

There are several examples of actions that students can take. Do any of them own sports wear or baseball hats of these teams? Ask the students if they feel comfortable continuing to wear these jerseys when they know that some First Nations object to these symbols.

2. AT THE MOVIES

The Hollywood movie industry has played a vital role in creating and perpetuating stereotypes of First Nations. Early stereotypes began in the days of the Western dime novel and the Wild West Show, two popular entertainment forms during the frontier days of North America. Movies perpetuated the stereotype of the marauding savage to heighten the drama and create suspense for audiences. First Nations were depicted as simplistic foils for the main characters and portrayed in ways that were historically inaccurate.

For example, traditional dances were shown as pagan rituals, while First Nations languages were made into meaningless gibberish that Hollywood thought was the way "Indians" sounded. Movies also popularized phrases that became stereotypical of First Nations speaking English, e.g. "How!" "White man speak with forked tongue." Generally, films portrayed First Nations as a silent, monosyllabic and simple-minded people.

The stereotyping of First Nations in movies continues today. Many Canadians do not know much about First Nations except what is presented on television or at the movies. As a result, they learn to perpetuate false images. Most filmmakers have also missed the opportunity to learn from the rich diversity of First Nations cultures. First Nations have been hurt by Hollywood stereotyping because they face the resulting prejudice every day and because these images inevitably become part of the way they see themselves. Worse, these images rarely portray the reality of life for First Nations or their communities today. As well as stereotyping First Nations, many films misrepresent their ways of life, portray a one-sided view of history, and ignore the important contributions First Nations made to North American life.

Tell students that they are world-famous movie reviewers. Ask them to review one of the following movies: **Indian in the Cupboard, Disney's Pocahontas, Thunderheart, Dances With Wolves, Disney's Peter Pan**.

The students should watch the movie carefully for its portrayal of First Nations peoples. Their assignment is to give the movie a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down," not for its entertainment value, but for its portrayal of First Nations. They should be prepared to discuss their reasons with the class.

3. THE ORIGINAL ENVIRONMENTALIST?

Many people have an image of the "Indian" as one with nature. The "noble savage" is an enduring popular stereotype of First Nations that still exists. Some First Nations, who believe that all First Nations are the caretakers of this planet, often promote this romantic stereotype.

The problem with stereotypes, even positive or romantic ones, is that they prevent people from understanding one another. They create barriers between people and cultures and lead to expressions of "we" and "they" that cause only more mistrust and suspicion. Respect and co-operation between members of different cultures begin with learning about people as they are. Images of people and cultures, whether they are positive or negative, stand in the way of that knowledge.

To facilitate the discussion, teachers should point out to students that traditional First Nations teachings encourage members to respect the Earth and all living things. However, teachers should also make clear that culture, and being a member of a culture, have little to do with whether an individual actually practices such teachings.

UNIT 9

FIRST NATIONS HEROES

MAIN IDEA

There are contemporary and historical First Nations individuals whom we can admire as heroes for their significant achievements. There are also people in our day-to-day lives who may not be famous, but who are important role models.

OBJECTIVES

1. to explore the life of a First Nations role model and learn about the contributions that First Nations have made to Canadian society
2. to identify and appreciate people in students' own communities who have made significant contributions to their lives and the life of the community

TEACHER INFORMATION

We all need good role models. We admire them for their achievements.

By providing us with examples of courage, honour and excellence, heroes and role models shape the dreams and aspirations of each generation. It is especially important that children have heroes. Without them, it is more difficult for children to dream where their own paths may lead.

Many First Nations individuals have contributed to Canadian society in significant ways. Unfortunately, most people know very little about First Nations heroes and role models. Many remain nameless in history because they have been ignored by mainstream media, history textbooks and education curricula.

With no exposure to the heroic achievements of First Nations, non-First Nations youth remain ignorant of the contributions of First Nations people who have shaped their world. And First Nations youth have often been left to find role models and heroes outside of their own cultures.

The aim of this unit is to identify role models for First Nations students so that they can become proud of their people and history. This unit also aims to inform other students of the important contributions of First Nations to Canadian society.

Students should not be left with the impression that the only First Nations heroes are famous individuals. There are First Nations people everywhere who work tirelessly to contribute to the quality of life in their communities. These role models may not be famous and they may not have attracted media attention. They may even avoid public accolades. These First Nations heroes may be politicians, hunters or counselors. Some work in business, others are healers. Students may feel that their parents, or members of their extended family, are First Nations heroes.

It is important that students develop an appreciation of these often unheralded contributors to our communities. Students will begin to understand some of the character attributes that make good leaders or strong members of the community. This, in turn, will reinforce the idea that they too, can make contributions to the community.

By asking students to identify First Nations heroes, this unit ultimately seeks to have students identify the heroes within themselves.

ACTIVITIES

1. WHAT IS A HERO?

The dictionary defines a hero as "one idealized or held in esteem for superior qualities or deeds of any kind."

Ask students what words they would use to describe a hero. For example, a hero is someone who displays:

- courage
- determination
- excellence
- honour.

When students have developed their own picture of what constitutes a hero, indicate that not all heroes are necessarily good role models. A hero is someone who is admired for his or her achievements, whereas a role model is someone who is emulated. For example, there are individuals who do not necessarily lead "model" lifestyles. We may admire the achievements of these people, but we would not want to pattern ourselves after everything they do.

2. FAMOUS FIRST NATIONS HEROES

When the class is finished with their discussion of the qualities of a hero, ask students to name some famous First Nations heroes.

Once the First Nations heroes have been identified, have students select three from the list. Instruct them to undertake class research about each hero. Their list may be supplemented with the following figures, which is far from exhaustive:

Ted Nolan	Bill Reid
Mary Two-Axe Early	Tecumseh
Graham Greene	Big Bear
Tantoo Cardinal	Tomson Highway
Buffy Sainte-Marie	Pauline Johnson
Tom Longboat	Angela Chalmers
Poundmaker	

While students should include biographical information about the persons they have selected, they are free to use any format they wish. They could write a research report, a biography, a poem or a personal reflection.

Students should be sure to include what influenced them to select those persons as famous First Nations heroes. What is it about these persons that is special? They may also include how these persons typified First Nations cultural values.

3. LOCAL HEROES/ROLE MODELS

Explain to students that their next activity is going to be very different from the preceding one. The people who are the objects of this research are not likely to be found in an encyclopedia or in glossy magazines. Students will need to become investigative reporters, using interviews and direct contact with their subject.

Students should choose a First Nations person in their community or their family whom they admire. Once they have selected someone, they should contact that person and find out if he or she is willing to be interviewed. Assuming the person is willing, the basic format of the interview should include any personal history details that are important, as well as the following questions:

- How did you become interested in what you do?
- What prompted you to choose that path?
- What difficulties have you encountered and how did you overcome them?
- What do you think your contribution has been?
- What are your personal dreams and goals?
- What advice would you give to students?

When the interviews are complete, as well as any additional research, each student should write a biography of their local hero. Students should also include their own reasons for considering this person's contributions to be important. Once completed, students can give a brief oral report to the rest of their classmates.

The class can create a visual display of all the completed biographies, which could include pictures, or design their own role model posters to be placed around the classroom.

Make sure that students send a copy of the biography to the person they interviewed, along with a letter of thanks for the time they volunteered.

4. VISIT FROM FIRST NATIONS LOCAL HEROES

After students have completed the biographies, they may want to invite these individuals in to speak to the class. It may be difficult to have all of the local heroes visit the classroom, so students should select a reasonable number.

Ensure that students have a gift for each local hero who takes the time to visit, and that they prepare a note thanking the person for his or her visit.

5. CHANGING HEROES

In many ways, the people that we consider to be heroes and role models reflect our own aspirations. As we grow and change as individuals, our heroes may also change.

Ask the students if they had heroes when they were in kindergarten and whether those people are still their heroes? If they are not, do they think this is a reflection of their own changes?

RESOURCES

GENERAL INTERNET SITES

Aboriginal Multi-Media Society, information on First Nation arts, culture, events and more.
www.ammsa.com

Aboriginal Youth Network, information on First Nation youth, web links and more.
www.ayn.ca

Bill's Aboriginal Links, links to many First Nations sites.
www.bloorstreet.com/300block/aborl.htm

Canada's Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development
www.inac.gc.ca

First Nations Confederacy of Cultural Education Centres, nation-wide links to First Nations cultural education centres.
www.schoolnet.ca/ext/aboriginal/fncced/index.html

First People's Homepage (Schoolnet), Aboriginal studies curriculum, links to First Nations schools across Canada.
www.schoolnet.ca/aboriginal

First Perspective Online, information on First Nations arts, culture, education, powwows and more.
www.mbnet.mb.ca:80/firstper/

Indigenous People Literature, Aboriginal legends and stories.
www.indians.org/welker/stories.htm

The National Film Board of Canada
www.nfb.ca

The Native Trail/La piste amérindienne, Aboriginal issues and more.
www.nativetrail.com

Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP)
www.inac.gc.ca/rcap/report/index.html

ENCYCLOPEDIAS

The Canadian Encyclopedia

- Includes numerous articles on First Nations cultures, figures, history, economies, political and social issues. Suitable for all grades.

The Canadian Encyclopedia Plus CD-ROM

- A multi-media tool for student research on a broad range of First Nations topics. It includes numerous articles on First Nations cultures, history, economies, political and social issues. Suitable for all grades.

TRANSPORTATION AND TRAVEL

The Canadian Encyclopedia Plus CD-ROM

- Includes information on all the traditional First Nations travel technology.

The National Film Board of Canada

- The Last Mooseskin Boat — 1987
- Snowshoe/La Raquette — 1978
- César's Bark Canoe/César et son Canot d'écorce — 1971

Roberts, Kenneth G. and Philip Shackleton. **The Canoe** (Macmillan of Canada, Toronto, 1983) ISBN 0-7715-9582-4

Ka-be-mub-be. **Keepers of the Earth. My People: A History of the Native American** (Prologue Inc., 1650 Bd Lionel Bertrand, Boisbriand, PQ. J7H 4N7) ISBN 0-7651-9104-0

Boats (Eyewitness Books, Stoddart Publishing, Toronto) ISBN 0-7737-2558-X

Gidmark, David. **Birchbark Canoe** (General Storehouse Publishing, Burnstown, Ontario, 1989. K0J 1G0) ISBN 0-919431-44-5

TRADITIONAL DWELLINGS

The Canadian Encyclopedia Plus CD ROM is a basic reference tool for information on all the traditional dwellings of the First Nations.

Tundra Books has published a series on traditional dwellings including a Teacher's Kit. The titles in the series are:

- Houses of Bark ISBN 88776-306-5
- Houses of Hide and Earth ISBN 0-88776-307-3
- Houses of Wood ISBN 0-88776-332-4
- Native Dwellings Teacher's Kit ISBN 0-88776-371-5

National Film Board of Canada

- Raven's Canoe: A Tour of the Grand Hall — 1993
- Canada Vignettes: Cree Conical Lodge — 1980
- Setting Up The Tent — 1977

WATER: ITS MANY USES

The previous references on canoes and snowshoes will help students understand the role of water as an agent of change.

Several of the Internet sites on traditional First Nations culture include details on traditional food preparation and tanning hides. Encourage students to explore these sites to locate information on First Nations' use of water.

The National Film Board of Canada

- The film Race of the Snow Snakes — 1972, illustrates the Iroquois game of snow snake

FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES: RESERVES

First Nations Schools on SchoolNet
www.schoolnet.ca/aboriginal/

Aboriginal Youth Network
www.ayn.ca

Indian Band Database
www.esd.inac.gc.ca/fnprofiles

THE FAMILY

Eyvindson, Peter. **Old Enough** (Winnipeg: Pemmican Books, 1986) ISBN 0-919143-41-5

- A First Nations father dreams of spending time with his newborn son when the child is old enough. The years pass, but finally as a grandfather, he is given a second chance to nurture

Loewen, Iris. **My Mom is So Unusual** (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications, 1986) ISBN 0- 919143-37-3

- A First Nations girl describes the relationship she has with her mother, a single parent who is her friend as well as her mom

Thompson, Sheila. **Cheryl Bibalhats (Cheryl's Potlatch)**. (Yinka Dene Language Institute, 1991) ISBN 1-895267-02-1

- The story of a young Carrier girl named Cheryl who gets her Indian name at a potlatch

Wheeler, Bernelda. **Where did you get your moccasins?** (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications, 1986) ISBN 0-919143-15-6

- A story about a First Nations student in an urban school who receives new moccasins from his grandmother

FIRST NATIONS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Wheeler, Bernelda. **I Can't Have Bannock But the Beaver Has a Dam** (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications, 1985) ISBN 0-919143-11-3

- A First Nations boy learns the relationships between nature and people when he asks his mother for some bannock

Bruchac, Joseph and Michael Caduto. **Keepers of the Animals** (Fifth House Publishers: Saskatoon) ISBN 0-920079-57-1

- Educational activities for children based on First Nations legends and traditional knowledge

Waterton, Betty. **A Salmon for Simon** (Vancouver, Douglas & McIntyre, 1978) ISBN 0-88894-168-4

- A young boy saves a salmon

Native Americans and the Environment Web Site
conbio.rice.edu/nae/index.html

- A collection of sites related to First Nations peoples and the environment

ELDERS

Johnson, Basil. **Tales the Elders Told — Ojibway Legends** (ROM Publications: Toronto, 1981) ISBN 0-88854-261-5

- Tales intended to pass on oral knowledge and traditional understanding. Tells of the origins of butterflies and bats, and Nanabush's tricks. Illustrations by Shirley Cheechoo

McLellan, Joseph. **The Birth of Nanabosho** (Winnipeg: Pemmican Press, 1989) ISBN 0-921827-00-8

- On a visit with their grandfather, Nonie and Billie learn the story of Nokomis and her grandson Nanabosho. Son of the West Wind, Nanabosho became a great teacher of the Anishinabeg

McLellan, Joseph. **Nanabosho Dances** (Winnipeg: Pemmican Press, 1991) ISBN 0-921827-14-8

- Grandparents working on their regalia for their grandchildren's powwow tell how Nanabosho invented dance

Pachano, Jane. **Changing Times: Bobby and Mary At Home** (James Bay Cree Cultural Education Centre: Chisasibi, 1985)

- Bobby and Mary's life is compared with that of their grandparents

Plain, Ferguson. **Eagle Feather: An Honour** (Winnipeg: Pemmican Press, 1989) ISBN 0-921827-11-1

- The grandfather of a young Anishinabe boy teaches him to observe the plants and animals and encourages him to dance. When the grandfather becomes too ill to attend the powwow, the boy dances alone for the first time

Plain, Ferguson. **Little White Cabin** (Winnipeg: Pemmican Press, 1992) ISBN 0-921827-26-1

- This story explores the relationship between a young Anishinabe boy and ol' Danny, who get to know each other when the boy brings the Elder a pot of soup

Stiegelbauer, Suzanne. **The Individual is the Community; the Community is the Word: Native Elders Talk About What Young People Need to Know** 1992, ED 349151

- A reference for teachers that explores a holistic world-view of education from the perspective of Mohawk and Ojibway Elders

Weber-Pillwax, Cora. **Billy's World** (Reidmore Books, 1989) ISBN 0-919091-54-7

- Billy enjoys living in town but feels that something is missing. On a trip with Granpa to check the trapline in the bush, he discovers he yearns for the solitude of the woods and oneness with the animals

Bibaajimowinan idash Aadizookaanag
indy4.fdl.cc.mn.us/~isk/stories/stories.html

- Native legends and stories, myths, narratives and more

Interviews with Saskatchewan Elders

www.lights.com/sicc/tofc.html

THE IMAGINARY INDIAN

Weatherford, J. **Indian Givers: How the Indians Transformed the World** (Crown: New York, 1990).

Taylor, Drew Hayden. **Toronto at Dreamer's Rock** (Fifth House: Toronto, 1990) ISBN 0-920079-64-4

- Aimed at a young audience, this short play depicts a contemporary Ojibway youth who is confronted with two members of his tribe — one from 400 years in the past and one from the future.

Native American Books

indy4.fdl.cc.mn.us/~isk/books/bookmenu.html

FIRST NATIONS HEROES

Archibald, Smith and Friesen (ed.) **Courageous Spirits: Aboriginal Heroes of Our Children** (Theytus: Penticton, 1993) ISBN 0-919441-50-5

Native Role Models

www.ayn.ca/pages/cover.htm

Spirit of First Nations Enterprise

www.sae.ca

Aboriginal Achievement Award Winners

www.cibc.com/aboriginal/achievement.html

Ted Nolan Poster

www.anishinabek.ca/aei/nolan.htm

My Hero Homepage

www.myhero.com

Native NHL Heroes

www.du.edu/~svalerio/native.html

Pauline Johnson Homepage

collections.ic.gc.ca/epj/epjhome.htm

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Tel: (403) 743-8555
Fax: (403) 791-4041

Grande Prairie Friendship Centre
10507 - 98th Avenue
GRANDE PRAIRIE AB T8V 4L1
Tel: (403) 532-5722
Fax: (403) 539-5121

High Level Native Friendship Centre
P.O. Box 1735
HIGH LEVEL AB T0H 1Z0
Tel: (403) 926-3355
Fax: (403) 926-2038

High Prairie Native Friendship Centre
P.O. Box 1448
4919 - 51st Avenue
HIGH PRAIRIE AB T0G 1E0
Tel: (403) 523-4511
Fax: (403) 523-3055

Lac La Biche Canadian
Native Friendship Centre
P.O. Box 2338
10004 - 101st Avenue
LAC LA BICHE AB T0A 2C0
Tel: (403) 623-3249
Fax: (403) 623-1846

Sik-Ooh-Kotoki Friendship Centre
1709 - 2nd Avenue S.
LETHBRIDGE AB T1J 0E1
Tel: (403) 328-2414
Fax: (403) 327-0087

Sagitawa Friendship Centre
P.O. Box 5083
10108 - 100th Avenue
PEACE RIVER AB T8S 1R7
Tel: (403) 624-2443
Fax: (403) 624-2728

Napi Friendship Association
P.O. Box 657
622 Charlotte Street
PINCHER CREEK AB T0K 1W0
Tel: (403) 627-4224
Fax: (403) 627-2564

Red Deer Native Friendship Society
4815 - 50th Street, Unit #99
RED DEER AB T4N 1Z1
Tel: (403) 340-0020
Fax: (403) 342-1610

Rocky Native Friendship Society
P.O. Box 1927
4917 - 52nd Street
ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE AB T0M 1T0
Tel: (403) 845-2788
Fax: (403) 845-3093

Slave Lake Native Friendship Centre
416 - 6th Avenue N.E.
SLAVE LAKE AB T0G 2A2
Tel: (403) 849-3039
Fax: (403) 849-2402

Mannawanis Native Friendship Centre Society
4901 - 50th Street, P.O. Box 1358
ST. PAUL AB T0A 3A0
Tel: (780) 645-4630
Fax: (780) 645-1980

SASKATCHEWAN

Buffalo Narrows Friendship Centre
P.O. Box 189
BUFFALO NARROWS SK S0M 0J0
Tel: (306) 235-4660
Fax: (306) 235-4544

Moose Mountain Friendship Centre
118 Souris Avenue W., Box 207
CARLYLE SK S0C 0R0
Tel: (306) 453-2425
Fax: (306) 453-6777

Qu'Appelle Valley Friendship Centre
P.O. Box 240
FORT QU'APPELLE SK S0G 1S0
Tel: (306) 332-5616
Fax: (306) 332-5091

Ile a la Crosse Friendship Centre
P.O. Box 160
ILE A LA CROSSE SK S0M 1C0
Tel: (306) 833-2313
Fax: (306) 833-2216

Kikinahk Friendship Centre
P.O. Box 254
320 Boardman Street
LA RONGE SK S0J 1L0
Tel: (306) 425-2051
Fax: (306) 425-3359

Northwest Friendship Centre
P.O. Box 1780
MEADOW LAKE SK S0M 1V0
Tel: (306) 236-3766
Fax: (306) 236-5451

Battlefords Indian & Métis Friendship Centre
1080 - 101st Street
NORTH BATTLEFORD SK S9A 0Z3
Tel: (306) 445-8216
Fax: (306) 445-6863

Prince Albert Indian & Métis Friendship Centre
1409 - 1st Avenue E.
PRINCE ALBERT SK S6V 2B2
Tel: (306) 764-3431
Fax: (306) 763-3205

Regina Friendship Centre Corporation
1440 Scarth Street
REGINA SK S4R 2E9
Tel: (306) 525-5459
Fax: (306) 525-3005

Saskatoon Indian & Métis Friendship Centre
168 Wall Street
SASKATOON SK S7K 1N4
Tel: (306) 244-0174
Fax: (306) 664-2536

Yorkton Friendship Centre
108 Myrtle Avenue
YORKTON SK S3N 1P7
Tel: (306) 782-2822
Fax: (306) 782-6662

Lloydminster Native Friendship Centre
Box 1364
4602 - 49th Avenue
LLOYDMINSTER SK S9V 1K4
Tel: (306) 825-6558
Fax: (306) 825-6565

MANITOBA

Brandon Friendship Centre
836 Lorne Avenue
BRANDON MB R7A 0T8
Tel: (204) 727-1407
Fax: (204) 726-0902

Dauphin Friendship Centre
210 - 1st Avenue N.E.
DAUPHIN MB R7N 1A7
Tel: (204) 638-5707
Fax: (204) 638-4799

Flin Flon Indian-Métis Friendship Assoc. Inc.
P.O. Box 188
57 Church Street
FLIN FLON MB R8A 1M7
Tel: (204) 687-3900
Fax: (204) 687-5328

Lynn Lake Friendship Centre
P.O. Box 460
625 Gordon Avenue
LYNN LAKE MB R0B 0W0
Tel: (204) 356-2407
Fax: (204) 356-8223

Portage Friendship Centre
20 - 3rd Street N.E.
PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE MB R1N 1N4
Tel: (204) 239-6333
Fax: (204) 239-6534

Riverton & District Friendship Centre Inc.
P.O. Box 359
RIVERTON MB R0C 2R0
Tel: (204) 378-2927
Fax: (204) 378-5705

Selkirk Friendship Centre
425 Eveline Street
SELKIRK MB R1A 2J5
Tel: (204) 482-7525
Fax: (204) 785-8124

Swan River Friendship Centre
P.O. Box 1448
1413 Main Street E.
SWAN RIVER MB R0L 1Z0
Tel: (204) 734-9301
Fax: (204) 734-3090

The Pas Friendship Centre
P.O. Box 2638
81 Edwards Avenue
THE PAS MB R9A 1M3
Tel: (204) 623-6459
Fax: (204) 623-4268

Ma-Mow-We-Tak Friendship Centre Inc.
122 Hemlock Crescent
THOMPSON MB R8N 0R6
Tel: (204) 778-7337
Fax: (204) 677-3195

Indian & Métis Friendship Centre
45 Robinson Street
WINNIPEG MB R2W 5H5
Tel: (204) 586-8441
Fax: (204) 582-8261

ONTARIO

Atikokan Native Friendship Centre
P.O. Box 1510
#307- 309 Main Street
ATIKOKAN ON P0T 1C0
Tel: (807) 597-1213
Fax: (807) 597-1473

Barrie Native Friendship Centre
175 Bayfield Street
BARRIE ON L4M 3B4
Tel: (705) 721-7689
Fax: (705) 721-7418

Pine Tree Native Centre of Brant
25 King Street
BRANTFORD ON N3T 3C4
Tel: (519) 752-5132
Fax: (519) 752-5612

Ininew Friendship Centre
Box 1499
190 - 3rd Avenue
COCHRANE ON P0L 1C0
Tel: (705) 272-4497
Fax: (705) 272-3597

Dryden Native Friendship Centre
53 Arthur Street
DRYDEN ON P8N 1J7
Tel: (807) 223-4180
Fax: (807) 223-7136

Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre
796 Buffalo Road
FORT ERIE ON L2A 5H2
Tel: (905) 871-8931
Fax: (905) 871-9655

United Native Friendship Centre
P.O. Box 752
516 Portage Avenue
FORT FRANCES ON P9A 3N1
Tel: (807) 274-3207
Fax: (807) 274-4110

Thunderbird Friendship Centre
P.O. Box 430
301 Beamish Avenue W.
GERALDTON ON P0T 1M0
Tel: (807) 854-1060
Fax: (807) 854-0861

Hamilton Regional Indian Centre
712 Main Street E.
HAMILTON ON L8M 1K8
Tel: (905) 548-9593
Fax: (905) 545-4077

Kapuskasing Indian Friendship Centre
24 Byng Avenue
KAPUSKASING ON P5N 1X5
Tel: (705) 337-1935
Fax: (705) 335-6789

Ne-Chee Friendship Centre
P.O. Box 241
152 Main Street S.
KENORA ON P9N 3X3
Tel: (807) 468-5440
Fax: (807) 468-5340

Katarokwi Native Friendship Centre
55 Hickson Avenue
KINGSTON ON K7K 2N6
Tel: (613) 548-1500
Fax: (613) 548-1847

N'Amerind Friendship Centre
260 Colborne Street
LONDON ON N6B 2S6
Tel: (519) 672-0131
Fax: (519) 672-0717

Georgian Bay Friendship Centre
175 Yonge Street
MIDLAND ON L4R 2A7
Tel: (705) 526-5589
Fax: (705) 526-7662

Moosonee Native Friendship Centre
P.O. Box 478
MOOSONEE ON P0L 1Y0
Tel: (705) 336-2808
Fax: (705) 336-2929

Niagara Regional Native Centre
R.R. #4
Queenston & Taylor Road
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE ON L0S 1J0
Tel: (905) 688-6484
Fax: (905) 688-4033

North Bay Indian Friendship Centre
980 Cassells Street
NORTH BAY ON P1B 4A6
Tel: (705) 472-2811
Fax: (705) 472-5251

Odawa Native Friendship Centre
12 Stirling Street
OTTAWA ON K1Y 1P8
Tel: (613) 722-3811
Fax: (613) 722-4667

M'Wikwedong Friendship Centre
1723 - 8th Avenue E.
OWEN SOUND ON N4K 3C4
Tel: (519) 371-1147
Fax: (519) 371-6181

Parry Sound Friendship Centre
13 Bowes Street
PARRY SOUND ON P2A 2K7
Tel: (705) 746-5970
Fax: (705) 746-2612

Peterborough Native Friendship Centre
65 Brock Street
PETERBOROUGH ON K9H 3L8
Tel: (705) 876-8195
Fax: (705) 876-8806

Red Lake Indian Friendship Centre
P.O. Box 244
#1 Legion Road
RED LAKE ON P0V 2M0
Tel: (807) 727-2847
Fax: (807) 727-3253

Indian Friendship Centre
122 East Street
SAULT STE. MARIE ON P6A 3C6
Tel: (705) 256-5634
Fax: (705) 942-3227

Nishnawbe-Gamik Friendship Centre
P.O. Box 1299
52 King Street
SIOUX LOOKOUT ON P8T 1B8
Tel: (807) 737-1903
Fax: (807) 737-1805

N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre
110 Elm Street W.
SUDBURY ON P3C 1T5
Tel: (705) 674-2128
Fax: (705) 671-3539

Thunder Bay Indian Friendship Centre
401 Cumberland Street N.
THUNDER BAY ON P7A 4P7
Tel: (807) 345-5840
Fax: (807) 344-8945

Timmins Native Friendship Centre
316 Spruce Street S.
TIMMINS ON P4N 2M9
Tel: (705) 268-6262
Fax: (705) 268-6266

Native Canadian Centre of Toronto
16 Spadina Road
TORONTO ON M5R 2S7
Tel: (416) 964-9087
Fax: (416) 964-2111

Council Fire Native Cultural Centre inc.
439 Dundas Street E.
TORONTO ON M5A 2B1
Tel: (416) 360-4350
Fax: (416) 360-5978

Can Am Indian Friendship Centre of Windsor
1684 Ellrose Avenue
WINDSOR ON N8Y 3X7
Tel: (519) 258-8954
Fax: (519) 258-3795

QUÉBEC

Cree Indian Centre of Chibougamau inc.
95 Jaculet Street
CHIBOUGAMAU QC G8P 2G1
Tel: (418) 748-7667
Fax: (418) 748-6954

Centre d'amitié autochtone La Tuque inc.
P.O. Box 335
544 St-Antoine Street
LA TUQUE QC G9X 2Y4
Tel: (819) 523-6121
Fax: (819) 523-8637

Centre d'amitié autochtone de Québec
234 St Louis Street
LORETTEVILLE QC G2B 1L4
Tel: (418) 843-5818
Fax: (418) 843-8960

Native Friendship Centre of Montréal
2001 Saint-Laurent Boulevard
MONTRÉAL QC H2X 2T3
Tel: (514) 499-1854
Fax: (514) 499-9436

Centre d'amitié autochtone de Senneterre inc.
910 - 10th Avenue
P.O. Box 1769
SENNETERRE QC J0Y 2M0
Tel: (819) 737-2324
Fax: (819) 737-8311

Centre d'amitié autochtone de Val-d'Or
1272 - 7th Street
VAL-D'OR QC J9P 6W6
Tel: (819) 825-6857
Fax: (819) 825-7515

NEW BRUNSWICK

Fredericton Native Friendship Centre
96 Regent Street, 2nd Floor
FREDERICTON NB E3B 3W4
Tel: (506) 459-5283
Fax: (506) 459-1756

NOVA SCOTIA

Micmac Native Friendship Centre
2158 Gottingen Street
HALIFAX NS B3K 3B4
Tel: (902) 420-1576
Fax: (902) 423-6130

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

St. John's Native Friendship Centre
112 Casey Street
ST. JOHN'S NF A1C 4X7
Tel: (709) 726-5902
Fax: (709) 726-3557

Labrador Friendship Centre
P.O. Box 767, Station "B"
HAPPY VALLEY-GOOSE BAY NF A0P 1E0
Tel: (709) 896-8302
Fax: (709) 896-8731

NOTES

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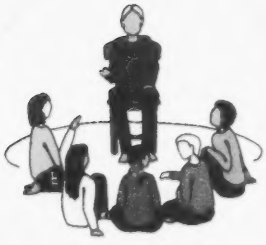
ALSO AVAILABLE

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES
AGES 4 TO 7



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